

Lávlumin njuvččaiguin — hupmamin gedggiiguin,
ruovttoluotta *Goase Dušše* - skerrui



Singing along to Whooper swans — talking with rocks,
Goase Dušše revisited

Credits and thanks

I am grateful to the following for sharing stories and information about Áillohaš and *Goase Dušše*:

Kristina Utsi and DAT, Mikael Brodin, Harald Gaski, Gunilla Bresky, Johan Anders Bær, Ánde Somy and Marjut Aikio.

I wish to send thanks to Kristina Utsi/DAT for answering a multitude of emails and granting me the permission to reprint some of the original pages from the *Goase Dušše* booklet (DAT 1994. Images by Áillohaš) and for the use of the original *Goase Dušše* sound file, as well as for digging up the Prix Italy folder. On behalf of Sveriges Radio, Gunilla Bresky gave me permission to reprint the folder, as well as unearthing and permitting the use of the original audio introduction she produced for the radio broadcast of *Goase Dušše*. Thank you!

The poem cited in the first text is taken from Nils Aslak Valkeapää's *Trekways of the Wind* (DAT 1994), DAT, translated to English by Ralph Salisbury, Lars Nordström and Harald Gaski.

The vivid bird drawings scattered around in this folder are taken from Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's *Ruokto Váimmus* (1985) and printed with DAT's permission.

I would like to thank Hanna Mattila for sharing her thoughts on Valkeapää's listening poetics with us.

I would like to thank Katya-Garcia Anton for thinking/feeling/reading the text and giving me feedback.

I am also grateful to Anna Morottaja for translating the title of my work to Northern Sámi and for proofreading Sámi place names in the first text in this booklet, as well as for her thoughtful input in the text.

I wish to thank Ben Bazalgette for the English language revision and a special thank you goes to Hans Gremmen for the graphic design.

Typography is Vinter (<https://monokrom.no>)

Finally I wish to show my gratitude to the Lásságámmi foundation for letting me stay at Lásságámmi in March 2018. It was decisive for completing my work on *Goase Dušše* for this group exhibition.

My research and work on *Goase Dušše* has only just begun. It will continue into the future with amongst other activities a collaborative sound work together with Sámi composer Anders Rimpi.

Please join me with guests Anders Rimpi, Hanna Mattila and Gjermunds Andersen for a forest sensory walk and deep listening to *Goase Dušše* on Sunday 27th May. Info to be found on the OCA website: www.oca.no

“Lávlumin njuvččaiguin — hupmamin gedggiiguin, ruovttoluotta Goase Dušše -skerrui. Singing along to Whooper swans — talking with rocks, Goase Dušše revisited” was commissioned by Office of Contemporary Art Norway on the occasion of the exhibition *Let The River Flow. The Sovereign Will and the Making of a New Worldliness*

Exhibition dates: 11.4-3.6 2018, Office of Contemporary Art Norway

Dear Listener!

Please leave a deposit with OCA in the form of your credit card or similar when taking a listening kit out for a walk.

The iPod in your listening kit has volume settings that can be adjusted to your liking.

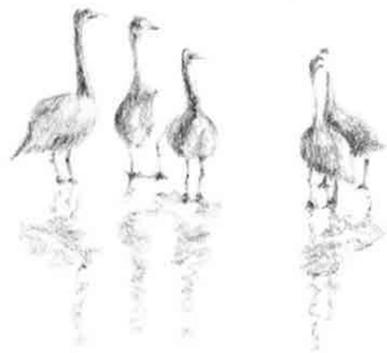
The iPod contains two tracks:

1. The introduction to the radio programme *Goase Dušše* as broadcasted on Swedish Radio on 22nd October 1992.
2. Nils-Aslak Valkeapää: *Goase Dušše (Loddesinfontiija/The Bird Symphony)*, 59:16 min

I can recommend walking and listening along the Akers elva / Aker river, which also hosts thriving birdlife, among which you can find some new feathered friends.

The little booklet in this folder contains texts and archive material. The first text shares some of the “making of *Goase Dušše*” stories that people who worked with Áillohaš over the years have generously shared with me as well as some personal thoughts on *Goase Dušše* as I grew to love the work dearly.

The second text is a conversation with Sámi literary scholar Hanna Mattila, titled *Áillohaš – the listening poet*.



Singing along to Whooper swans –
talking with rocks, Goase Dušše revisited
by Elin Már Øyen Vister

He grew up alone
he liked birds
the first spot to thaw in spring
delighted him
He learned to be alone
to play his own games
real games
For hours he waited for trout
Time was different
Each day as long as itself
not one like any other
He learned to imitate birds
To scream like a rough-legged buzzard
Or a plover
Was not unusual for him

(From N. A. Valkeapää's *Trekways of the Winds*, p. 119)

"We were nomadic Sámi, meaning Sámi who had a summer place and a winter place, and we were always on the move. This was the best time of my life, because I was alone. But it's completely wrong to say it was only me there... There was nature: the birds and the forest, the wind and the sky. I was by the waterfalls, amongst mountains and rocks. It was a very exciting time... Nature is my master." ¹

Day 1 – A listener's home
Lásságámmi, Ivgobahta, Monday 12th March 2018

Dear Listener!

The soft almost comforting yellow to blue pastel light over Ittugáissáid /Lyngsalpene welcomes me to Lásságámmi as the day, bringing a longed-for glimpse of spring, comes to an end. A few hours later, I turn off all the lights in Lásságámmi and I walk outside and look out up at the night sky. That deep space-time of the cosmos is greeting me. In the Sámi tradition, a hunting scene is playing out in the sky, from the beginning of the night until the end; the skilled hunting brothers Gállábártnit's knife, spear and cooking pan (Orion's belt), are shining bright. I don't think I have ever experienced anything like this; stars so bright they mirror in the ocean. I take it as a sign. You have all the tools you need, which carries a strong message for me as I am about to stitch together this text from a multitude of conversations. In the dark starlit night, Lásságámmi turns into a ship floating through the cosmos, and I am on board. Everything is always on the move.

And then I hear the bird sounds... I left Goase Dušše (*Loddesinfonija/ The Bird Symphony*) playing on the stereo in Lásságámmi, and now it's seeping out through the windows. Goase Dušše returns to the poet's home and listening outpost. The sounds moving through the glass are those of a busy spring soundscape. I hear them like *vardøgr*; they will be sounding in the valleys and mountains surrounding Lásságámmi and Áillohaš's Sápmi in a month or so.

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, aka Áillohaš, created Goase Dušše on a commission from the Music Drama Group/Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. It premiered on Swedish radio on 22nd October 1992, and the following year it won the prestigious Prix Italy radio award for "the imagination, poetry and technical excellence of the programme". The close to one hour symphony of nature consists of field recordings from Sápmi, and thirty or so minutes into the composition we come across Áillohaš's yoik amid the busy soundscape of a reindeer herd. The bird symphony was mixed in Áillohaš's little cottage in Beattet (Pättikkä), Northern Sápmi, together with the Swedish sound engineer Mikal Brodin. The work was produced by Gunilla Gustafsson (later Bresky) and Sven Åke Landström for the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, Luleå. Goase Dušše was released as a CD by DAT Records in 1994.

Áillohaš spent his lifetime listening to and being at one with nature. From the mid '70s onwards, he released several albums where he would mix in both his own recorded material as well as archive material. And probably around the same time, he invested in some high-quality sound recording equipment of his own. First he bought a Nagra analogue tape recorder. Kristina Utsi remember it as being bought in Romssa/Tromsø, and then in the late '80s he bought a DAT recorder on one of his trips to Japan. He began placing this recording technology out in nature; capturing the soundscapes of his Sápmi:

*“The bird symphony we are about to hear is a composition consisting of nature’s own sounds. From the first snowflake that melts in March until the final song of the Whooper swan in the autumn before it makes its way back south. It follows the reindeer herding Sámi’s sonic world, from spring in the mountains down to summers by the sea, and back up again to the mountains in the autumn. It is a journey undertaken with the sun, in the world of birds, from March to October. All recorded by Áilu and completed in his house by the waterfall, with the wind, snow and reindeer outside the door.”*²



Listening to Sámi aesthetics

*“Eanni, eannázan shares with all of Valkeapää’s books a characteristic attention to the ways in which individual components of the work — its words, images, layout and associations — combine to create a larger unity, a mosaic in which the sum is greater than its parts. In Eanni, eannázan, this unity challenges the reader to contemplate broader questions about our place as individuals, as cultures and as societies in relation to an ambient environment that sustains all life, including our own. It is a challenge to every person to view themselves as part of a larger cosmic collective, to live one’s life in a manner that demonstrates an Indigenous, aesthetic sense of life...Herein lies the most essential core of the aesthetic act of being mindful, particularly in contact with — in contract with — our Mother the Earth. It is the particular role of Indigenous peoples to remind the rest of humanity of this crucial idea without which we cannot hope to survive.”*³

The first time I listened to Goase Dušše was only a few years back, and I was instantly drawn to the immediacy of what sounds like a sonic poem. The careful, patient dramaturgy, the sensitivity of the ears of the recorder (Áilu’s), the recorded material itself and how it has been mixed together, are all part of what make Goase Dušše so unique and gives the composition a timeless quality. I would also like point out that at the time of its making in 1991-1992, it might have been the first holistic soundscape composition of its kind. Like the body of all of Áillohaš’s works, Goase Dušše was created within Sámi aesthetics as Harald Gaski states in his essay *Indigenous Aesthetics: Add Context to Context*:

*“ In the subtitle above, I suggest the use of the South Sámi term dâajmijes vœkie for Sámi aesthetics... These are also the unwritten conditions of dâajmijes vœkie, which I would call a Sámi equivalent of Indigenous methodology. It comprises a holistic approach to being human and acting accordingly, i.e. paying respect to fellow citizens, traditions, nature, and one’s own surroundings. Dâajmijes vœkie contains a scholarly perspective (a rich vocabulary of concepts pertaining to all kinds of human activity), an ethical perspective (approach and conduct) and a community-responsive perspective (implying the requirement of returning the knowledge to your local community)...”*⁴

There are two other artists/composers I would like to mention who have created soundscape compositions since the late '80s, whom I was inspired by throughout my educational years, who have a more holistic or eco-feminist approach: the Canadian composer Hildegard Westerkamp and Annea Lockwood from

Aotearoa/New Zealand. They are both among the very few women who stand out in an otherwise white male dominant history of Western experimental music and composition. Still they are white and of European descent, which might explain why I discovered the works of the two earlier than those of Valkeapää.

I have never come to terms with the part of Norwegian culture that reflects and practises the patriarchal European philosophical tradition. I find it destructive and not at all democratic. Maybe it is because I grew up with parents that were politically active on the left side of politics, who had a careful love and respect for nature which they taught their children. And maybe also because I grew up in Veitvet a suburb on the east side of Oslo, with inhabitants of diverse ethnic backgrounds and I went to a primary school where half of the children spoke Punjabi or Urdu? What I do know is that if I had had the joy of being introduced to Nils Aslak Valkeapää's poetry, artwork and writings earlier in my life, it might have given me a much needed and sought after existential philosophy of life and also a profound vocabulary to understand and describe my own interdisciplinary practice (why I have resisted being boxed in my whole life, both in the sense of interests and artistic practice). Instead, I have been searching since my youth, at times desperately, for a more holistic way, and have created some kind of patchwork of a life philosophy informed and inspired by Buddhist, indigenous, intersectional, post-colonial, eco-feminist and queer writings/actions that continue to resonate within me and which speak to my heart.

The tragic reason why Áillohaš's and other Sámi artists' work is not – or at least was not – part of the curriculum of Norwegian art and academia when I was being educated between 1982-2014, is the ongoing colonial reality and history of the Norwegian state and its nationalism. In addition to the brutal colonisation of the Sámi people, the nation state of Norway has neglected to tell the truth and teach 'Norwegian' ⁵ children about Sámi history, present, culture and language. Instead the state still uphold and reproduce the Eurocentrism of Western academia in their national tales and in the education system, and the Sámi peoples lack real sovereignty. I would like to pose the question of why for instance is there the 'Arne Naess Programme on Global Justice and the Environment' at the University of Oslo ⁶ but not the 'Nils Aslak Valkeapää' programme? It goes to show how there is an urgent need for a radical decolonisation process in the Norwegian education system and academia. I would like to quote Canadian métis anthropologist Zoe Todd, who makes a poignant comment on what she thinks is a contemporary Western appropriation of indigenous ideas within the recent

paradigm shift in Western academia (the ontological turn, the post-human, etc). In the article "An Indigenous Feminist's take on the Ontological Turn: 'ontology' is just another word for colonialism" ⁷ she writes:

"Personal paradigm shifts have a way of sneaking up on you. It started, innocently enough, with a trip to Edinburgh to see the great Latour discuss his latest work in February 2013... In his talk, on that February night, he discussed the climate as sentient, the climate as a 'common cosmo-political concern' ...Funny, I thought, this sounds an awful lot like the little bit of Inuit cosmological thought I have been taught by Inuit friends (friends who taught me that the climate is an incredibly important organising concept for many actors). I waited through the whole talk to hear the great Latour credit Indigenous thinkers for their millennia of engagement with sentient environments, with cosmologies that enmesh people in complex relationships between themselves and all relations, and with climates and atmospheres as important points of organisation and action.

She goes on to write:

"The Euro-Western academy is colonial. It elevates people who talk about Indigenous people above people who speak with Indigenous people as equals, or who ARE Indigenous... As scholars of the Euro-Western tradition, we have a whole host of non-Indigenous thinkers we turn to, in a knee-jerk fashion, when we want to discuss the 'more-than-human', sentient environments, multiple ontologies/epistemologies or experiential learning. There are many reasons for this. I think Euro scholars would benefit from reading more about Critical Race theory, intersectionality, and studying the mounting number of rebukes against the privilege of European philosophy and thought and how this silences non-white voices within and outside the academy." ⁸

Finally, I would like to point out that I was humbly aware of the above when I negotiated to take on a work by none other than the Nils Aslak Valkeapää, Sápmi's pride, as I am Norwegian, not Sámi. I am trying to listen and learn, and I am dedicated to being careful not to appropriate Sámi ideas and thoughts without due credit in my engagement with Sámi artists and culture. I have hereby tried to share a bit of my own history in an attempt to explain how I have come to engage with Sámi and indigenous methodology and aesthetics.

Áillohaš takes us through an ancient soundscape, one which has become more silent every year since the late 1980s. We listen to the soundscapes surrounding his cabin in Beattet (Pättikkä), the close by lake of Máhtejavri, Áddjagorsa a few hours walking distance from Beattet (Pättikkä) and as Kristina Utsi tells me, he also walked across the road into the mountains on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, close to Gilbbesjavri (Kilpisjärvi).

Mikael Brodin, the sound engineer who assisted Áillohaš in mixing *Goase Dušše*, explains that early on in the process, Áillohaš had told him that with the making of *Goase Dušše*, he “*wanted to save the soundscapes for the coming generations, as some sort of an act to conserve the environment,*” and “*that a hundred years ago, you could hear these sounds in the Stockholm region, but not anymore. Today (1991) we can still hear them up in the mountains, but they are disappearing there too. And in another 100 years from now, these sounds will not be heard anymore.*”

Goase Dušše lets you listen to the soundscapes that Áillohaš and his ancestors was born into, amid which they lived and died, and knew by heart. We listen to the cycle of seasons: wind, weather, ocean, waves, melting ice, bird song, reindeer herding and *yoik*. Falling asleep listening to a busy spring-summer night in June through the thin walls of a *lávvu* will never be the same as sleeping in an insulated wooden or concrete house. In a *lávvu* you are in the midst of it all. *Goase Dušše* is furthermore a sonic love letter to his winged soulmates; the ptarmigan, the willow ptarmigan, the European golden plover, the Eurasian dotterel, the wren, the grey-headed chickadees and other small birds, the rough-legged buzzard, the whimbrel, the common snipe, the great snipe, the black-throated loon, the long-tailed duck, the black grouse, the common gull, the European herring gull, the black-backed gull, the kittiwake, the gannet, the razorbill, the Eurasian eagle-owl, Arctic terns and their soundings. Áillohaš, who named himself ‘*lottiid mánná*’, child of the birds, has often wondered why he was not born with wings himself.

“Nils-Aslak Valkeapää was born in 1943. The family lived for a period in Áddjagorsa, a couple of hours walk from Beattet (Pättikkä) on the road between Kaaresuvanto (Gárasavvon) and Kilpisjärvi (Gilbbesjavri) in Northern Finland (Sápmi). Later they settled down in Beattet (Pättikkä), and then his parents chose to move to Skibotn (Ivgobahta) in North Troms, Northern Nils-Aslak inherited the house. His mother belonged to a family whose summer home was on Uløya (Ulisuolu) in Troms, while his father was from a reindeer-husbandry family from the Kaaresuvanto area. Nils-Aslak felt connected to both areas, but moved to Skibotn (Ivgobahta) on a permanent basis in 1996.”⁹

Áillohaš wanted to mix *Goase Dušše* in a professional manner, close to nature in his home in Beattet, and not in a studio in Stockholm. The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation in Luleå, therefore, engaged Mikael Brodin who drove up to Áillohaš's cabin with a house van and took with him two new state-of-the-art digital Yamaha mixers, worth 500,000 Swedish kroners at the time. They installed the desks in Áillohaš's cabin, and once they got started he just asked Mikael Brodin to “*forget about clocks and watches and let nature and our own feelings tell us what to do.*” For three weeks they just slept, ate and worked on the mix. Prior to Mikael Brodin's arrival, Áillohaš had drawn up a score, which even had notes. You can see a part of this score in the Appendix, as featured in the original Prix Italy programme. Mikael Brodin remembers that Áillohaš was very accurate with regard to what he wanted to do, and that he had created a framework of the composition in his imagination. He had a bookcase full of labelled DAT tapes, and he would bring Mikael small tapes and tell him that “*we are about to take this journey through sound,*” and “*take this tape and here you fast forward 10 minutes,*” which Mikael did, and they recorded a short part from that tape, and then he brought him a new tape and they recorded 32 minutes from that. After that, he went back to his notes/graphic score and so on. They spent time listening to and testing which recordings worked and which did not. The digital mixing desk had good EQs, and Mikael remembers putting a lot of work into removing noise with low and high-pass filters, homing in on the particular sounds they wanted to use. After weeks of putting the sonic pieces together, a final stereo mix was ready, which was later mastered in Stockholm with both Mikael and Áillohaš present. The working relationship between Áillohaš/DAT and Mikael Brodin was to continue for years to come.

Listening through Áillohaš's discography, *Vuoi, Biret-Máret Vuoi!* from 1977 (DATCD-50) is the first album where he begins to incorporate field recordings with yoiks and music. Tracks such as *Mearrasápmi* start with the sound of waves and seagulls, and *Eahket – livaid áigi* has birdsong all throughout the track. As Kristina Utsi from DAT pointed out to me, Áilu strongly believed that yoik should be recorded in the landscape and places they were composed. So as a producer of many yoik albums and contributor to many radio programmes, this became his and DAT's own Sámi recording methodology. The album *Sápmi, Vuoi Sápmi* from 1982, (Ingor Antte Áilu Gaup & Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Indigenous records, 1982) begins with a field recording of a ptarmigan and a distant reverberated yoiking melody by Áilu. Later on, a harsh shift occurs, and we are transported to a live sound recording from the Alta conflict. We are listening in on what sounds like the Stilla protection camp being removed by force, by 600 police and soldiers over the New Year of 1981. These were field recordings Ingor Antte Áilu Gaup had recorded in situ, according to Kristina Utsi.

I begin to notice a development in his work: he lets longer and longer stretches of field recordings play out. By the time he composed *Goase Dušše*, he lets nature speak for itself, and only enters into the composition at 31.42 min as a reindeer herder calling for his herd (unless it's someone else). This is a particularly beautiful moment in the composition, as the sound of ocean waves fades out and a reindeer herder calls to his reindeer herd, and suddenly a Eurasian eagle-owl is mixed in to answer the call twice, in a call and response fashion. Then Áillohaš begins yoiking in the midst of the reindeer herd, before nature once again takes centre stage some ten minutes later.

What can only be described as a double bow or rounded strikes of permanent magnetism of Northern Light hang in the sky north above Lásságammi, and I in my body memory I am drawn home to my own home on Grimsøya, in the Røst archipelago (The south-westernmost tip of Lofuohta/Lofoten) where I often see this Aurora bow above my house. Røst brings us to another winged soundscape and a natural symphony – the one I and all the other Røst beings listen to each spring and summer – that of the seabirds of the Røst archipelago. The coming and going of breeding seabirds is an cyclic event that has been taking place as far back in history as we can imagine. The first peoples who arrived here came to these striking ocean lands that had ice-free shores and plentiful fish, whales, shells, seals, pelagic birds and all kinds of edible marine plants and animal life. An ancient myth tells a tale of Lofuohta/Lofoten as the home of the gods. And what reminds me of the Sámi wind god *Bieggolmmái* reigns amongst the cave paintings of Helvete (Hell), a cave inside the Trenyken bird mountain.

The sea gulls and kittiwakes return in February, as the dark time comes to an end. They hover loudly around their dedicated nests sites, as the eagles' curiosity is aroused, staking out potential prey from small rock tops, and flying about more regularly. In April the puffins, guillemots, razorbills and other pelagic seabirds return to the shores of the bird mountains, and a new breeding season begins. But these seabirds have not managed to create any surviving offspring in more than 10 years, so the colony is doomed for silence and oblivion within another 25 years, unless things change for the better.

The reason why I decided to move to Røst in 2014, and not just keep visiting, was to be more present. To bear witness to the silencing of these ancient seabird mountains. To stay with and slowly get to know these landscapes and their human and non-human inhabitants, and to make sound recordings of these wonderfully rich and vibrant seabird colonies and surrounding landscapes, before it's too late. I began the work in 2009, and just nine years later, Vedøya, one of the bird mountains, is almost silent. What was once the most numerous seabird colony in Northern Europe is undergoing an acute crisis. And this is the situation that Áillohaš was already aware of and mourning when he created *Goase Dušše* in 1992:

“Regarding this programme... I am so often there that I almost know, hour by hour, the ongoing in nature. I know when certain birds are singing. I know where to find them. And I can take this technique with me... Sadly, this is no longer right. You know, the last five years... the world is changing... It was completely

different only four years ago... Today you do not know where to find the birds. For example 20th March or 20th October, what you will find...? The world has changed so severely and I almost think... there is no way back... I am not sure if nature still exists. I mean, the birds are dying, they will become extinct, I mean nature will die... Very, very ready to die too, yes, because I do not want to live in a nature that is not a nature... I have done something like a final grouping. If you listen you will help. Not me, but nature.”¹⁰

With Goase Dušše, Áillohaš wished to bring us the joy of listening to a symphony of the natural world, but at the same time he is sending a severe warning. Close to 20 years later, we know that Mother Earth had already entered her sixth extinction event when he spoke of dark times to come. And sadly, it's not only on Røst that the situation for seabirds is critical. There has been a steady decline in most circumpolar seabird colonies in Norway/Sápmi (and globally) as far back as the '50s, and increasingly so throughout the 21st century. The situation for the kittiwakes is dire. They are now listed as critically endangered on the Norwegian red list, and the kittiwake colony of Ihkkot/Ekkerøy in Várjjat/Varanger has more than halved since Áillohaš recorded there. What the future looks like for nature is more uncertain than ever. Climate change, pollution, food shortages, habitat pressure and a growing number of sea eagles are all reasons why the kittiwakes and other seabirds are struggling. The only species that are doing well are the gannets of Storstappan, in Máhkarávju / Magerøya, North Cape, where Áillohaš recorded the gannets you can hear on Goase Dušše; “This colony, on the outermost island of the Gjesvær archipelago, is the most successful in the region, being established in 1987 and reaching 500 occupied nests by 1995... Since then it increased further to around 1,200-1,300 occupied nests by 2008...and has almost filled what was otherwise a grass-covered terraced slope.” (Rob T. Barrett)

Day 2-6 – Lásságámme, Ivgobahta, Sápmi – Some kind of nature

I take a stroll along the rocky beach of Lásságámme. A flock of purple sandpipers come flying in like a synchronised bird brigade and begin feasting on some tiny crustaceans while sounding like their onomatopoeic Julevsámi name *fiervvátjoavtjoj*. Crows and ravens spy on me, asking what I am doing there, reporting back to each other. And early yesterday morning, I was awoken by the loud sounds of eagle flirtation as two sea eagles were basking just under Lásságámme. I could hardly believe my ears for how loud they were as they eventually flew off in elegant swirls, chasing each other along the ice-clad, rocky beach. Some kind of nature is alive here.

I have been spending a year on a slow research process trying to trace the story of “the making of Áillohaš’s Goase Dušše”. Why? I wanted to spend time listening to the rich sonic world of the *Loddesinfonijja* as part of a process of getting to know Áillohaš’s interdisciplinary artistic practice. And I wanted to ponder the question: How is nature doing today some 26 years later? And with an immense sense of sadness I am reminded of what we already know, but what many of us continue to ignore: it’s critical. And so I find it incredibly urgent and important to speak about Goase Dušše and spread the key message it contains: Listen to the soundscapes of the natural world while they still are around – nature is dying!

The sounds of the natural world have been the soundtrack to humanoid lives for millions of years. It is only in the past 150 years or so that the soundscape of an industrialised and urban world has become predominant in many people’s lives. The global noise level on planet Earth is increasing by approximately 1 DB every year. International studies show that industrial noise affects the release of stress hormones in our bodies. Stress and trauma, as we are learning, are the cause of many health issues that lead to sickness and early death among people and all living beings. The sound of the natural world has an innate calming and healing effects on us. It links us all to Mother Earth, our known and unknown ancestors, and our common pasts. We begin and end together.

*Can you hear the sound of life
in the roaring of the creek
in the blowing of the wind*

*That is all I want to say
that is all*

(From N. A. Valkeapää’s *Trekways of the Winds*, p. 119)

1.
From the radio introduction to
Goase Dušše. Gunilla Gustafsson
(later Bresky) in conversation with
Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. Transcribed
and translated from Swedish to
English by E. M. Øyen Vister

2.
As above.

3.
Harald Gaski, *Indigenous
Aesthetics: Add Context to Context*,
p. 191, *Sami Art and Aesthetics:
Contemporary Perspectives*,
Svein Aamold, Elin Haugdal and
Ulla Angkjaer Jorgensen (eds.),
the authors & Aarhus University
Press 2017.

4.
Ibid, p. 188.

5.
I choose to use 'Norwegian' in
brackets as I do believe there is
no such thing as a Norwegian
ethnicity. My genetic pool as a
Norwegian is a multicultural mesh
from both Western Europe and the
East.

6.
[http://www.sum.uio.no/english/
research/projects/arne-ness-chair/](http://www.sum.uio.no/english/research/projects/arne-ness-chair/)

7.
Journal of Historical Sociology,
Volume 29, Pages 4-22, Issue,
Academic Freedom and the
Contemporary Academy, March
2016.

8.
Ibid

9.
Harald Gaski, "Nils-Aslak
Valkeapää - en ydmyk samisk
stemme i verden",
www.lassagammi.no. Norwegian
to English translation and Sámi
place names by E. M. Øyen Vister

10.
From the radio introduction to
Goase Dušše. Gunilla Gustafsson
(later Bresky) in conversation with
Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. Transcribed
and translated from Swedish to
English by E. M. Øyen Vister

Áillohaš – the listening poet: a conversation between Hanna Mattila and Elin Már Øyen Vister

Can you give us an example of his listening poetics?

What comes to mind is one very
beautiful and philosophic example
from *Trekways of the Wind* (1994).
It's not all about listening, rather
like in many of Valkeapää's poems,
the atmosphere of the poem is very
multisensory.

This is my life
winds and smoky snow
sunshine and drizzle
the sound of bells and dogs barking
the bluethroat singing
in the tundra as wide as a sea

that is how my life's rain falls
winds blow
ice rumbles
storms howl across the tundra

this is my life
the sorrow's tears, the heart's crying
its happiness and joy
and delight
yesterday and today
brothers and sisters
young and old
men and women

this is my life
I am a part of nature
I feel I know
the yoik in the wind
the birds singing in the summer night

How do you experience listening to his listening to nature and his surroundings, the landscape and co-beings in his poetry?

It is worth noting that in Valkeapää's
poems, different sounds – and on
the other hand, the lack of them –
are as important as visual images.
However, I have to admit, prior to
having this conversation with you, I
did not pay that much attention to
the actual vocal dimension of his
written work. Nevertheless, when read
out loud, poems change their shape
from visual to vocal, or in many cases,
ending up being both at the same
time. This kind of synesthetic form of
artistic expression and understanding
the surrounding world is, from my
point of view, very characteristic of
Valkeapää's poetics.

As a poet, Valkeapää often takes
on the role of listener and observer.
This creates the impression of
directness in his poetry. In addition
to his poems, *Goase Dušše* (the
'Bird Symphony') is one of the finest
examples of this kind of directness.
Like many of his poems, the 'Bird
Symphony' does not try to explain
its subject, but rather invites us
to experience a journey into an
incredibly rich soundscape of Nordic
nature. In his poems, he has the
ability to draw readers' attention to
the smallest details, which is often
where the beauty of nature is found.
The footprints of a willow grouse on
crusty white snow, or the sound of
cracking ice are the kind of natural
wonders he asks us to see, hear and
appreciate.

Are you listening to his listening in his poetry?

For me, the most natural way to approach the listening and the soundscape in his poems is through the concept of language. Language is widely used as a metaphor of discrimination and assimilation in Sámi literature, and Valkeapää's poetry offers no exception. The concept of language operates in his writing on many different levels. Like typical postcolonial and emancipation-oriented texts, his poems present language as a complex power structure on which ethnic identities and political institutions are built. Language is a way to oppress, control and classify. On the other hand, language can also operate as a de-colonising force. In his poetry, this can be experienced through his love for the Sámi language. The concept of language is also strongly connected to the way in which he describes the relationship between his human and nonhuman surroundings. For him, the yoik as a human sound is a natural way to connect to the landscapes surrounding him and other co-beings. Like in *Eanni, Eannázan* (2001, 48), which remained his last poetry book, the first-person speaker in the poems finds a common language with animate and inanimate nature through the use of yoik: "ábiin/ juoiggan/ lottiiguin/ ovttas/ eará juigiiguin/ MII/ juoigat" (with the sea / I yoik / with birds / together / with other yoikers / WE / yoik). In Valkeapää's poetry and other forms of art, nature has a language of its own. As I interpret it, the language of nature is something man can hear but never fully understand as being ontologically separate from it. In *Eanni, Eannázan* he writes: "luonddus lea iežas vuoidna / dat hupmá iežas giela" (nature has a voice of its own / it speaks a language of its own). And adds: "Dat hupma go lea dárbu" (it speaks when necessary).

What do you mean when you say "the language of nature is something man can hear but never fully understand as being ontologically separate from it"?

One of the key features in Valkeapää's eco-philosophical thinking is biocentrism. A biocentric worldview is a recurring feature throughout his poetical work, but culminates in *Eanni, Eannázan*. When speaking about Valkeapää's poetry, Leena Valkeapää (2011, 252) points out that even though nature is a safe and homely place for humans, a human can never fully blend into it. From my point of view, this underlines the independence of nature from human aspirations to see meaning in it.

What is he listening to?

Throughout his poetic works, Valkeapää listens to the voices of the natural world. As Harald Gaski points out: "Valkeapää did not write about nature; he wrote nature." His nature-inspired poems have the same kind of directness as Japanese Haiku. Still, the nature described in Valkeapää's poems has a deep metaphorical dimension. Like in traditional yoiks, natural phenomena and annual changes in the environment reflect the emotions and inner senses of a person living in close relation with nature.

What is he asking us to listen to / what is he asking you to listen to?

In the introduction to his book *The Way Back* (2016), Sámi poet Niillas Holmberg writes: "Looking through the eyes of an indigenous poet, there are two escape routes from the sickness of the modern industrialised world." The best way home is through the remotest corners of the forest. That's the way he took when he travelled all the way from Ohcejohka/Utsjoki to the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala to write his poems. The other way, according to Holmberg, is to go back into the past; to seek advice from our ancestors and embrace their values and worldview, and most importantly, incorporate them as a living part of our present day. This route, looking back, that of nostalgia for a traditional way of life, is a recurring strategy in Valkeapää's poetry to survive the insanity of the present day. When addressing us, the Sámi people, he asks us to listen to the voices of our ancestors and their wisdom. For example, in *Trekways of the Wind*, he writes: "[--] Somewhere deep within me / I can hear it / a voice calling / and the blood's yoik I hear / in the depths / from the dawn of life / to the dusk of life."

In the radio introduction to *Goase Dušše, Áillohaš* gives his people and the other peoples of the Earth a warning; nature is dying. From his perspective as a Sámi philosopher, I understand he also means we, the humans are dying. If we cannot listen to the voices of nature and the voices of our ancestors living in nature, we'll be lost children and we will die. How do you interpret his lament?

Well, Joni Adamson remarks that in Native American literature, environmental issues are often seen in relation to the impact of colonial powers. Like in Native American literature, environmental inequality reflects social inequality in Valkeapää's art. Alongside nature, his work defends the rights of the Sámi. In his poems, like in this statement, these two are often described as inseparable.

In everyday life, and with regard to traditional livelihoods, The Sámi face many similar environmental problems to other indigenous peoples around the world. The Sámi homelands have been affected by the invasion of mining and logging companies, hydroelectric power projects and tourism, and what's more are threatened by pollution. For Valkeapää, connecting environmental issues closely to ethno-political matters is not only natural, but also of course an important starting point for his artistic work.

I have noticed a development in his recorded material over time. He brings more and more field recordings into his work. This culminates with *Goase Dušše*, where his own voice is far in the background, letting nature speak for itself. We come across his yoik for only 10 minutes in the middle of a reindeer herd. When the yoik enters, melting into the soundscape, it seems more powerful than ever. Could you tell me a bit about how you experience the entrance of the yoik at that particular time?

Yes, this same development can be read in his poetry. In his later days, Valkeapää's expression condenses to leave more and more room for the subjects of his poems and fades in the poet's presence. This development can be seen in *Eanni*, *Eannáčan*, where many poems are physically shorter, consisting only individual words sprinkled onto paper, yet bearing a broad spectrum of meanings. The moment in *Goase Dušše* when the yoik enters feels for me like a subtle reminder of the presence of the artist. At the same time, it reminds us as listeners that the human presence in nature is also part of it.

How do you think his (Áillohaš's) listening developed over the years of his life?

There are many recurring themes in his poetry. The Sámi people, indigenous rights, nature, birds, reindeer, wind and sun are elements present throughout his written work. The two things closest to his heart – nature and its beings, including the Sámi people and our culture – are what he preferred to describe in his poems. The clangour of a reindeer herd or northern wind blowing in the mountains are soundscapes to which he returns repeatedly.

Hanna Mattila (34) is a Sámi literary scholar, born and raised in Southern Finland, although her roots are in Finnish Sápmi. She currently lives and works in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, in the heart of the Sámi community. She works as PhD fellow in the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino. As part of her ongoing dissertation project, she studies the poetry of Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. The study material consist of all of his poetry books. She is particularly interested in the many ways in which Valkeapää outlines the delicate relationship between humans and nature in his poems. The artistic process described in his poems, especially the role of the poet between natural beauty and the artistic outcome, also fascinates her. The theoretical framework of her study is based on indigenous methodologies, ecocriticism and poetry studies.

Elin Már Øyen Vister (b. 1976) is a Norwegian artist and composer based in Røst, Nordland/Sápmi. With a broad audio and music background (DJing, producing, field recordings and radio), Elin Már works in several artistic disciplines. They revolve around listening as an artistic practice and as a way of composing, sensing and experiencing the world. Two of her ongoing projects are Soundscape Røst and Deconstructing Norwegian-ness. She prefer to create site-specific works and survey local ecology, history, ethnography, infrastructure and so forth. By listening to the ocean, the sky, birds, mountains, buildings and people's oral and written stories, Øyen Vister seeks to include both the human and the non-human, the spoken and the untold in the nature-cultures we live in. Her work breaks with hegemonic Western narratives that place the human being in the centre, and instead focuses on the innate stories and knowledge of the landscape.

Together with the Røst AiR working group they host the Røst Artist in Residency, an artist-run workshop and AiR project, at Skomvær Fyr, Røst, Nordland/Sápmi.

www.elinmar.com
www.childofklang.no
www.rostair.com



Nils-Aslak Valkeapää - Áillohaš

23.03.1943 – 26.11.2001

1978–1983 Lapin läänintaitelijä (Leanaiddár/The artist of Laplands county)
1978–1981 WCIP (World Council of Indigenous Peoples) kultur koordinatoor /Cultural coordinator

Girijit / Books

- 1971 *Terveisiä Lapista* Otava, Helsinki
- 1979 *Helsing frá Sameland* Pax, Oslo
- 1983 *Greetings from Lapland* Zed Press, London
- 1974 *Gida jiat Cuovgadat* Áillohaš, Oulu, Finland
- 1980 *Keađváv yčt nien vallošat*
- 1976 *Lávlla vižar biellacčiččč* Sabmeleat-doaimmahus & Áillohaš, Helsinki
1981 *Ádjंगा silbašuoat* Vuovjij, Gáresuoan, Finland
1985 *Ruohtu Váimmus* (trilogija/trilogy) 74, 76, 81, DAT
- 1987 *Váiderna inom mig* DAT & Café Existens, Göteborg
- 1990 *Vindens veier* Tiden, Oslo
- 1994 *Trekways of the Wind* DAT
1985 *Ich bin des windigen Berges Kind* im Waldgut, Wald, Schweiz
1988 *Beaivi, áhččáán* DAT
- 1990 *Solen, min far* DAT
- 1992 *Aurinko, isäni* DAT
- 1992 *Fádr min, solin* (selected poems) The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands
- 1997 *Nap, Edesapam* Domokos Johanna, Budapest, Ungarn
- 1997 *The Sun, My Father* DAT
- 1994 *Nu guhkkín dat mii lahka / Sá fjern det nære* DAT
1996 *jus gázzebiehtár bohkasivččii* DAT
1999 *girddán, seivvoda* DAT
2001 *Eanni, eanndán* DAT
- 2006 *Jorda, min mor* DAT

Doaimmaheadji / Editor

- 1992 *Paulus Utsi: Dan žanat mu alcesat* DAT
- 2000 *Fáji stigen* DAT
- 1994 *Boares Nuotti Johan Thuri* DAT
1995 *Illu! Joy! Radost!* (Childrendrawings from the Arctic; Children in Reindeer Husbandary) DAT
1998 *Hans Ragnar Mathisen Elle Hánsa, Keivselie* DAT
1984 *Vuoddudii DAT os - Sáme girječielgáđus ja skearobuvttadeadji*
Founded DAT Ltd. - Sámi Publisher and Record Company

Bálkkašumit / Awards

- 1978 *Lapin Sivistyseuran kultainen ansiomerkki* Helsinki, Finland
The Society for the Promotion of Sámi Culture Gold Medal
- 1985 *Davviráikkáid Sámi ráđđi guđnebálkkašupmi*
The Sami Council's Honorary Award Sápmi, Samiland
- 1987 *Tidningen Vi - litteraturpris* Stockholm, Ruokta/Sweden
Tidningen Vi Journal's Literature Prize
- 1988 *Lapin läänin taidepalkinto* Rovaniemi, Suopma/Finland
Province of Lapland Art Award, Finland
- 1991 *Davviráikkáid girječielgáđusvuodabálkkašupmi* girjijis Beaivi, áhččáán
Nordic Council's Literature Prize for the book Beaivi, áhččáán
Copenhagen, Denmark
- 1993 *Prix Italia, Radio: Music Special prize* loddiesinfonija Goasse dušše
for Bird Symphony Goasse dušše Roma, Italia
- 1994 *Sámi Parlaamentta kulturbálkkašupmi*
The Sami Parliament's Culture Prize Anár, Sápmi, Finland
- 1994 *Eanoađaga gieldda kulturbálkkašupmi*
Municipality of Enontekiö's Culture Prize, Finland
- 1996 *Talteen Suomi-palkinto*
Opetusministerio / Ministry of Education, Helsinki, Finland

Musihkka / Music

- LP/CD/MC
(eanaš lea Áillohaš dahkan - mostly composed by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää)
- 1968 *Jokkuja* Otava, Helsinki, Finland
1974 *Vuoi Biret-Maaret, vuoi!* Áillohaš, Beattet, Suomanjirgga, Finland
(2009 DATCD-50)
- 1978 *Sámi eatnan duoddariid* Indigenous Records, Helsinki, Finland
(1992 DATCD-13)
- 1988 *Beaivi, áhččáán* DATCD/MC-4
1990 *Eanan, eallima eadni* DATCD/MC-5
1992 *Beaivi, áhččáán jietnagovadas* (divttat musihkkain/poems mixed with music) DATCD/MC-10
- 1973 *Juogamat* Finnlevy, Helsinki
1976 *De Čáába niegut ruumiid* Hi-Hat, Helsinki
1976 *Duvvo, Áilen Niga Elle ja Áillohaš* Hi-Hat, Helsinki
1982 *Sápmi, vuoi Sápmi!* Indigenous Records, Helsinki (1992 DATCD-13)
1982 *Davvá ja goassid* Indigenous Records, Helsinki (1992 DATCD-13)
1992 *Sápmi lottáán* DATCD-13, II
1992 *Sámi luondu, gollersku* DATCD-11
1994 *Goasse dušše* Loddiesinfonija/Bird Symphony DATCD-15
DAT & Sweriges Radio/Swedish Broadcasting Corporation
- 1994 *Dáveleikkat / Wintergames* DATCD-17
2009 *Vuoi Biret-Máret, vuoi!* DATCD-50
2010 *Alit idja lahkana / Blue Night Moving Closer* DATCD-51

Divttat Suonjaguin / Music composed for Poems

- 1983 *Tulia táivaalla, hullunsoittaja* Seppo Paakkunainen
Herman Hesse ja/and Nils-Aslak Valkeapää divttat/poems
- 1985 *Op. 45* Lávllaráđu Nils-Aslak Valkeapää divttaide (Ruoktu váimmus) Pehr
Henrik Nordgren baritonin, seilui ja pianu / Song Cycle to Poems
(Trekways of the Wind) for baritone, cello and piano
- 1986 *Áđgajohka, silbačuojan* Seppo Paakkunainen
Lávllaráđu/Lyrics Suite made for Nils-Aslak Valkeapää divttaide/poems
- 1986 *Pohjoiset vuodenaajat* (The Northern Seasons) laulusarja mezzo-
sopranolle ja jousilvartelle / lávllaráđu/suite for Mezzo Soprano, String
Quartet, Kjel Chydenius
- 1990 *Beaivi, áhččáán* (The Sun, my Father) Op. 70 Pehr Henrik Nordgren
Nils-Aslak Valkeapää divttat/poems. Choral for 3 mezzo-sopranos, tenor,
bass, mixed choir and orchestra

GUĐNEBÁLKKAŠUMIT / HONORY AWARDS

- 1994 *Phil. d.h.c. Oulun Yliopisto* / Oulu university, Finland/Suopma
1999 *Kasvatustieteen kunniaohjari* Lapin yliopisto
Honorary doctorate Lapland university, Rovaniemi Finland / Suopma

GUĐNEMEDALJA / ORDEN

- 1995 *Eesti Vabariigi Valgethe teenetemärk* V klassi 16.05.1995
Republic of Estonia's Order of the White Star

ÁILLOHAŠ BÁLKKAŠUMIT / PRIZES ESTABLISHED IN HONOUR FOR NILS-ASLAK VALKEAPÄÄ

- 1993 *Áillohaš musihkkabálkkašupmi* / Áillohaš Music Prize
NSR (Norjaga-sámiid riikkasearvi/ Norwegian Sami Association),
Guovdageainnu suohkan/ Kautokeino municipality, Guovdageainnu
Sámiid searvi/ Kautokeino Sami Association. Juohke jagi beassáidid
Guovdageainnu / at the yearly Easter Festival in Kautokeino Norway

A BIG CRASH

Guovvamánu 26 b. 1996 / February 26, 1996 he was involved in a serious road accident near his home, Sinet-njunnii. He survived and gradually took up his work again.

Dáidda / Work of Art

- ČÁÁHUSAT / EXHIBITION
tevenngat/drawings, akrylmolemat/paintings, govat/photos, soarvi/dead pine tree, hirsat/
timber, muorra/wood, gáđgáid/stone
- 1973 Oulu, Suopma/Finland
1975 Rovaniemi, Suopma/Finland
1991 Harstad, Norga/Norway
1992 Torshavn, Fearsuolu/The Faroe Islands
1992 Tromsø, Norga/Norway
1992 København, Denmark/Denmark
1993 Atlanta, USA*
1993 Tokyo, Japan*
1993 Barcelona, Spain*
1993 München, Duiska/Germany*
1994 Lillehammer OL -94, Norga/Norway*
1994 Kirkenes, Norga/Norway
1995 Kárásjohka/Karasjok, Norga/Norway
* Dáiddár Lillehammer XVII Olympiasáid dáivegihvohalan
kulturprogrammas 1993-94, ja dáisa lassii mieđer ráhpanidilávuođas
1994. Artist in the Culture Programme for the XVII Olympic Wintergames
in Lillehammer 1993-1994 and performed the Olympic Welcome yolk
during the Opening Ceremony in 1994.
- 1995 Beavdeleagga Suomanjirgga boazoorohakkil
Streamer for the Suomanjirgga Reindeer husbandry area
1998 Harbin, Kina
1998 Beijing, Kina

FILMMAT / FILMS

- 1987 *Ofeleás / Veiviseren / The Pathfinder* Nils Guop
- sookpadákká / composer (1/3)
- nevtii "sáida sut" / acted the Groups headman
(Ofeleás leai evttohuvon Oscarin / was nominated to the
Oscar/Academy Award)
- 1993 *Solens sghin og mådens datter* Selve Skagen
- juđisid biđan / yolk composer
- nevtii / acted "Agiemiela Áilu" (noaidi, shaman)

NOH-TEÁHTER / THEATER

- 1995 *Ritnoaivi ja nieguid oaidni* Nils-Aslak Valkeapää
- nevtii / acted "Ritnoaivi" Sapporo, Japan

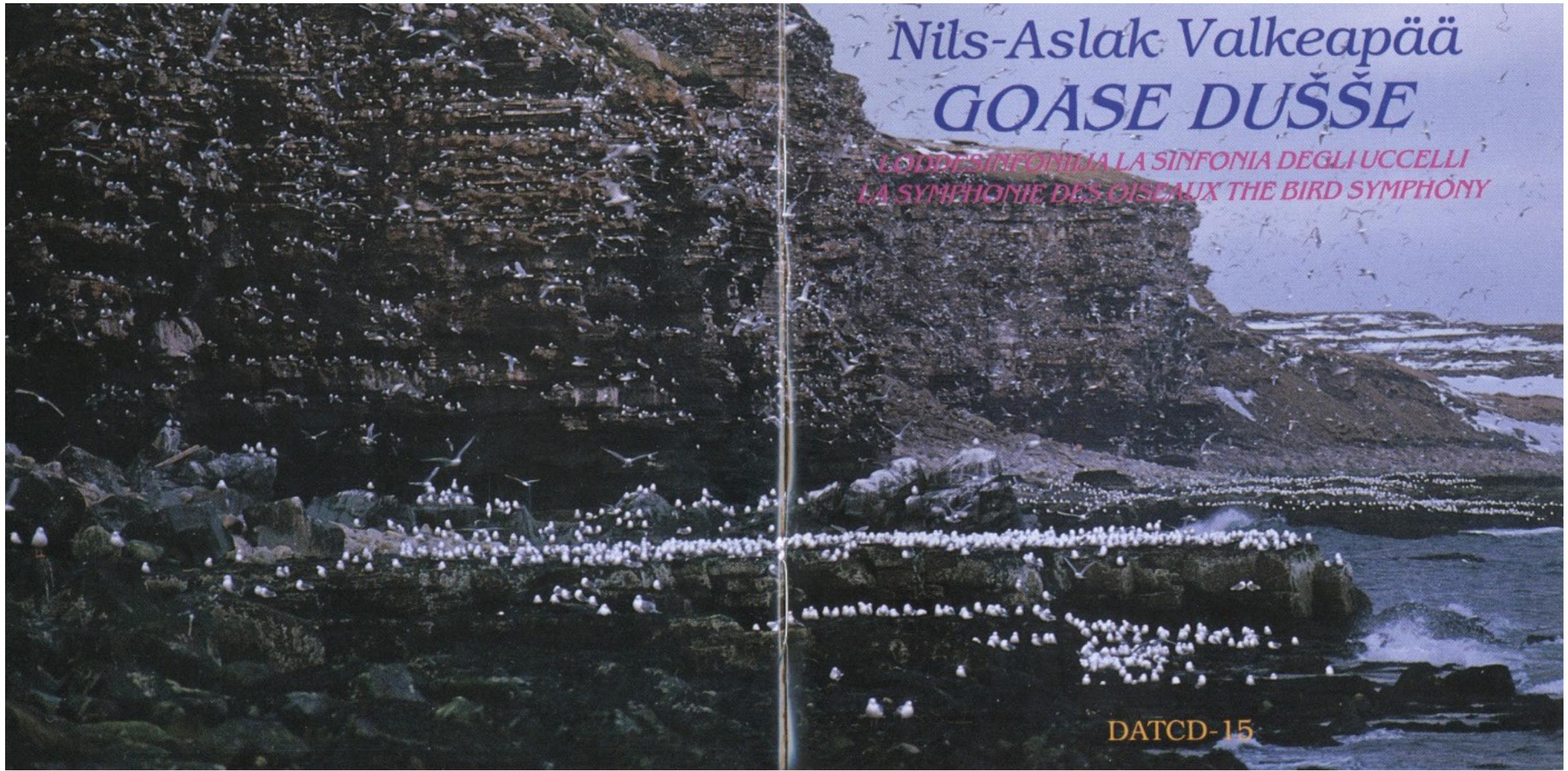
GULLOGOVVA / RADIO PLAY

- 1992 *Dela Jámáin* lálli/author John E Utsi
Produced by Sweriges Radio / SR Sami Radio Kristina Utsi
- nevtii / acted "Lásse" (Lars Niksson)

MULTIMEDIA

- audio, audiovisuella, multimedialat barggut radioi ja/dahje lávdiid
audio, audiovisuál, mult artistically works for radio and/or stage
- 1978 *Johtima jienat* Ruokta radio / Swedish Radio
1980 *Ruoktu Váimmus*
1980 *Beaivi basuhus* Ruokta radio / Swedish Radio
1991 *Eanan eallima eadni*
Bohten jal niegáđid nieguid OG / OL 1994
1994 *Vuolggán lean boahtime* OG / OL 1994
1994 *Nu guhkkín dat mii lahka* OG / OL 1994
1995 *Ritnoaivi ja nieguid oaidni* Sapporo, Japan
1997–2000 *Poeskanserttat / Yolk poetry concerts*
Oslo, Stockholm, Sivangere, Overtorneå, Beijing, Sapporo, Tokyo

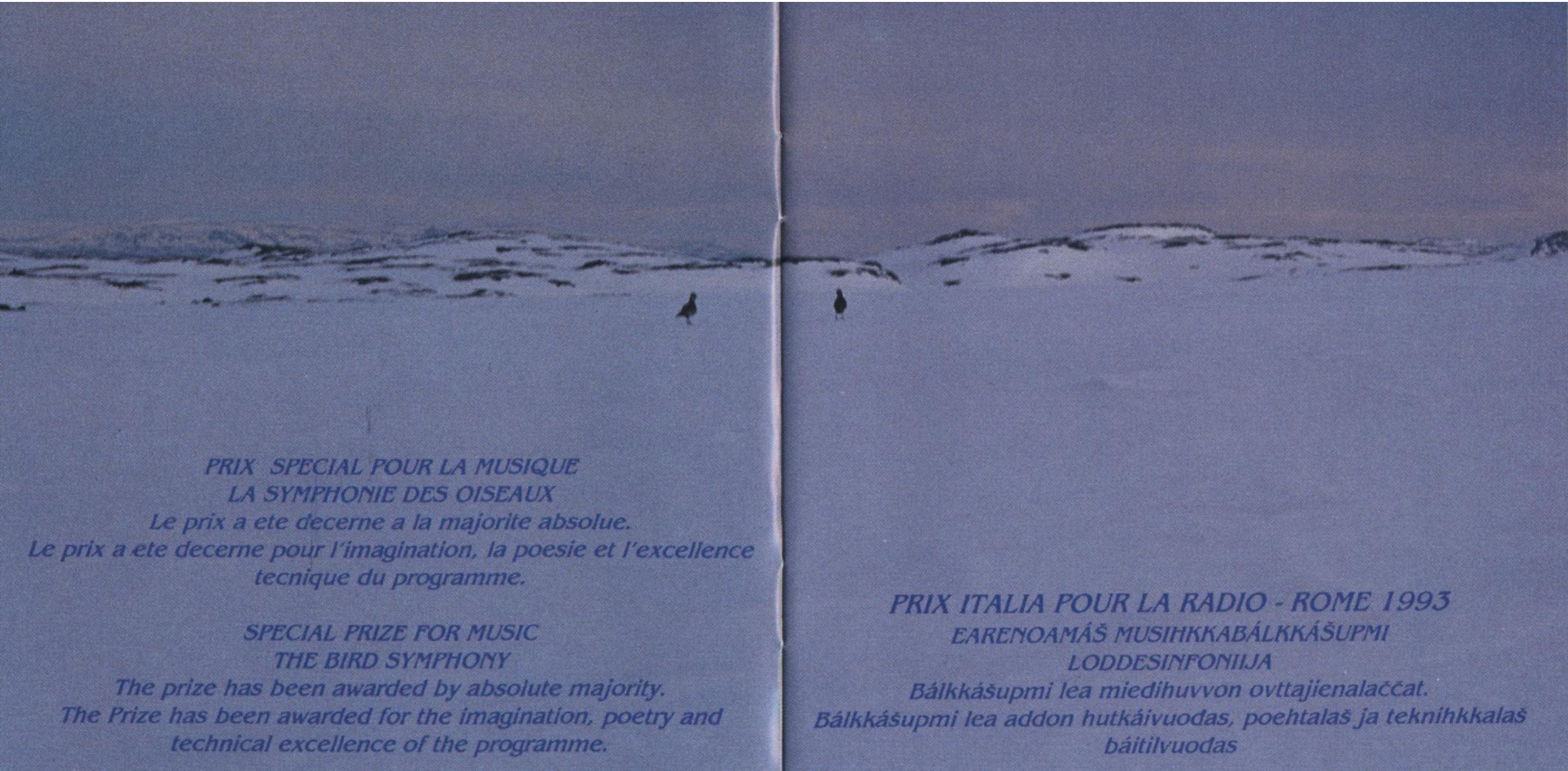
Kaleandara doaimmahar/Editors: Kristina Utsi, DAT ja/and Harald Gaski, Lásšagámmi-vuodđudus
Molemaid goven/Photo of the paintings: Hans Brox
Molema kaleandara duogbealde goven/Photo of the painting on the back cover: Hans-Odd Utsi
Govva kaleandara duogbealde/back cover photo: Kristina Utsi



Nils-Aslak Valkeapää
GOASE DUŠŠE

*LODDE SINFONIIJA LA SINFONIA DEGLI UCCELLI
LA SYMPHONIE DES OISEAUX THE BIRD SYMPHONY*

DATCD-15



*PRIX SPECIAL POUR LA MUSIQUE
LA SYMPHONIE DES OISEAUX*

*Le prix a été décerné à la majorité absolue.
Le prix a été décerné pour l'imagination, la poésie et l'excellence
technique du programme.*

*SPECIAL PRIZE FOR MUSIC
THE BIRD SYMPHONY*

*The prize has been awarded by absolute majority.
The Prize has been awarded for the imagination, poetry and
technical excellence of the programme.*

*PRIX ITALIA POUR LA RADIO - ROME 1993
EARENOAMÁŠ MUSIHKKABÁLKKÁŠUPMI
LODDESINFONIIJA*

*Bálkkášupmi lea miedihuvvon ovttajienalaččat.
Bálkkášupmi lea addon hutkáivuodas, poehtalaš ja tehnikkalaš
báitilvuodas*





*On-site recording in the nature of Sápmi,
photos, layout, CD producer:
Nils-Aslak Valkeapää*



© 1994 DAT, Pb 31, N-9520 Guovdageaidnu

Goase Dušše A Bird Symphony

by

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää



*it was not the wind
you did not hear the bird
it was I
my thoughts*

ENTRY FOR PRIX ITALIA 1993
RADIO: MUSIC

Goose Dušše - A Bird Symphony

by

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää

Sound engineering: Mikael Brodin

Commissioned by the Music Drama Group
Produced by Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, Luleå

Produced in cooperation with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
and the Finnish Broadcasting Company

- I ASSAI
ANIMATO
- II CON ANIMA
CANTABILE
- III CON FUOCO
- IV LARGO
MORENDO



Producers: Gunilla Gustafsson and Sven Åke Landström

Duration: 59'20

First broadcast: 24 October 1992

Poems translated by: Harald Gaski, Lars Nordström and Ralph Salisbury

AILÚ — ONE OF THE FEW WHO REMAIN

Drive to Karesuando, 400 kilometres north of Luleå, itself 1,000 kilometres north of Stockholm, set the trip to zero, turn east and drive exactly 45 kilometres across the Finnish border. Then stop the car, get out and walk 200 metres west. That's where Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (or Ailú as he's called in The Sami language) lives in his blue, red, white and pink-coloured cottage. Although his real home's up in the mountains. He can stand just about two weeks in a big city before he has to return to the vast, open spaces of the North. "In Stockholm I'm alone, but not here," he explains.

The first time I went to see him I was forced to turn back; the sky had already sunk into the ground, the road was unploughed and the Volvo couldn't make it through the drifts. But the next day the sun was shining like a fiery torch and the snow crunched underfoot as we helped each other carry in our equipment. Shortly afterwards I was sitting in Ailú's home in front of my internally driven 25-bit workstation with three Digital Audio Tape Recorders and a big box of tapes, a sampler and a modulating Roland D50.

Ailú's home has no running water, and there is no toilet. But outside the window a hare scuttles through the snow and tumbling whitewater carves its way through countless miles of wilderness. The contrasts are stunning! Ailú comes in, says "Hello" and settles in the sofa, saying that we should start work only when we're both ready. He's already asked me to forget about clocks and watches and let Nature and our own feelings tell us what to do.

What we are to do is put together an hour's natural symphony, a work composed solely of Nature's own sounds — water, birds, silence, stones, rumbling ... Ailú says that purely natural sounds, like those in our symphony, could be heard in Stockholm 100 years ago, and in Luleå a mere 50 years ago, but that soon they will no longer be heard at all, not even here in the wilderness. This is the first winter of his life, he says, that the whitewater in the river outside has not once frozen. The swans went south two weeks earlier than ever before, and the animals he always been able to find at a certain place and time of the year are no longer there. So with the symphony he's preserving a piece of untouched Nature for posterity.

One night the electricity goes, and outside it's -39° C. By morning I'm stiff with cold, and my teeth are chattering, but when I meet Ailú his "Hello" comes with a warm and wonderful smile. I reflect that that must have been how they smiled in Stockholm 100 years ago, and in Luleå 50 years ago. And that soon there won't be a smile like that at all, not even in Beattet, In Finland, in the wild wilderness of the North, perhaps not even in the whole world.

Mikael Brodin

Mikael Brodin, who was born in 1960, has worked as a sound engineer for the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation since 1985. He plays the violin and electric bass and has been a member of symphony orchestras and rock groups alike.

At SR, Brodin has worked chiefly with musical recordings and creative productions. His skills as a sound engineer have also proved invaluable for a number of commercial pop and rock recordings.

*I see our fields
the places we live
and hear my beat
all this is my home
and I carry it
within me
in my heart*

(From "The Trekways of the Winds")

*All of this is my home
these fjords rivers lakes
the cold the sunlight the storms
the night and day of the fields
happiness and sorrow
sisters and brothers
all of this is my home
and I carry it in my heart*

NILS-ASLAK VALKEAPÄÄ

Born in 1943, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää is known to his Sami friends as Áillohas, or Little Ailo. He himself says he is the son of the sun, the child of the birds; like them, he knows no geographical bounds. His family lived by the Sami tradition, following the movements of the reindeer. He is a Finnish citizen but lives in both Finland and Norway, and from the window of his cottage you can see Sweden on the far bank of the river. "All of it", he says, "is Sápmi (Lapland)".

Although Nils-Aslak Valkeapää originally trained to be a teacher, he chose instead to devote his life to art. And like himself, his art knows no bounds, ranging from the traditional Sami yoik to poetry, painting and drawing. All are parts of the same whole, and all stem from Valkeapää's own world: mountains, sky, wind, reindeer, birds and sun.

He took his first steps as an author in 1971 and since then has published a number of collections of poetry. The language he writes in is naturally his native Sami language, although his works have been translated into Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Icelandic, German, English, French, Spanish, Russian and Japanese. Since he is also a gifted artist and photographer, he designs and illustrates his own books so that text, illustrations and photographs complement each other to perfection. In 1991 he received the Nordic Council's literary award for his book *Beaivi, áhčážan* (The Sun, My Father). Three years previously, in 1988, the Sami drama group Dalvadis staged a play based on the book.

Ailú is an accomplished exponent of the traditional Sami yoik, which he has successfully combined with both classical music and jazz. He has introduced the art of the yoik on stages all over the world in concerts which are a powerful combination of yoik, music, poetry and painting. He has recorded some ten LPs and CDs.

He has also appeared in films, notably *The Pathfinder* (1986-87) and *Son of the Sun* (1993). In 1992 he played the leading role in the first Sami play produced for radio, *By the Power of Fire*. During the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, Ailú will be one of the central personalities in the cultural events scheduled to take place in conjunction with the Games. The inauguration ceremony will begin with a yoik by Ailú; his pictures will be on show to the public and he will be giving several concerts.

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää is the foremost cultural personality of the Sami people and as such has inspired an entire generation of young Sami yoikers, writers, actors and artists.

From Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's production:

BOOKS:

- 1971 *Terveisiä Lapista* (Greetings from Lapland: the Sami — Europe's Forgotten People, English edition, 1983)
- 1974 *Giđa ijat čuovgadat*
- 1976 *Lávlló vizar bielločizáš*
- 1981 *Ádjaga silbasuonat*
- 1985 *Ruoktu váimmus* (three collections of poems)
- 1987 *Vidderna inom mig* ("The Trekways of the Winds" — Swedish translation of *Ruoktu váimmus*)
- 1988 *Beaivi, áhčážan*, poetry
- 1990 *Solen min far* ("The Sun, My Father" — Scandinavian translation of *Beaivi, áhčážan*)
- 1992 *Aurinko, isäni* (Finnish translation of *Beaivi, áhčážan*)

AWARDS

- 1987 *VI Magazine's literary award*
- 1991 *Nordic Council's literary award*

LPs, CDs, MCs

- 1968 *Joikuja*
- 1975 *Vuoi Biret-Maaret, vuoi!*
- 1978 *Sámi eatnan duoddariid*
- 1988 *Beaivi, áhčážan*
- 1990 *Eanan, eallima eadni*
- 1992 *Beaivi, áhčážan*
- 1992 *Sámi luondu, gollerisku*
- 1992 *Sápmi lottážan*

several recordings with other artists

EXHIBITIONS

- 1975 *Rovaniemi, Finland*
- 1991 *Harstad, Norway*
- 1992 *Torshavn, Faeroe Islands*
- 1992 *Tromsø, Norway*
- 1992 *Copenhagen, Denmark*
- 1993 *Atlanta, USA*
- 1993 *Tokyo, Japan*

FILMS

- 1986-87 *Ofelaš* (*The Pathfinder*)
- 1991-92 *Solens son och månens dotter* (*Son of the Sun, Daughter of the Moon*)



*I am Ailú, son of the sun,
child of the birds*

Sápmi

The Sami people are the oldest ethnic group in Scandinavia and the North. The earliest traces of Sami culture, uncovered on the shores of the Arctic ocean, date back to about 6000 BC. There are officially about 60,000 Sami people in all, although the Sami people themselves reckon their total population to amount to some 100,000.

Present-day Sápmi, the area inhabited by the Sami people and commonly known as Lapland, stretches from northern Norway and Sweden into Finland and Russia. Although they are spread across four different countries, the Sami people regards themselves as one people sharing a common culture and a common language. In 1986 they adopted their own flag.

Originally the Sami people were hunters and fishers. Over the centuries, however, reindeer herding become their principal livelihood and they began to follow the herds as they migrated between their winter and summer pastures. Today, with hydroelectric power projects, forestry and mining operations, and the ever expanding network of roads encroaching on the pastures, reindeer herding, hunting and fishing can provide a livelihood for only a small minority of the overall population.

The Sami people are a people who have always lived close to Nature in an arctic climate, a fact that is readily apparent from their culture and language. Sami contains numerous words describing the weather and other natural phenomena. There are, for instance, more than 100 words for describing various types of snow.

In Sami mythology, the sun is the father of the Sami people; the earth is their mother. In pre-Christian times, Sami religion was intimately linked with Nature, and its rites reflected a deep respect for every living thing.

A life close to Nature without upsetting the natural balance of the wilds is still central to Sami life and culture today.

The yoik, handicraft/duodji and the telling of tales are central to Sami cultural tradition. The yoik, for example, is one of the oldest and most original of all European musical forms. In the yoik, melody and words are intimately interwoven (although words are not necessary and a yoik may be performed without them). The melody is normally pentatonic and has neither beginning nor end. Juoigat ("to yoik") is a means of remembering, of describing, of telling of landscapes, of people, and of animals.

(From an information brochure published by the Association of Swedish Sami people)



Sápmi



The present extension of the Sami people

The frame consists of Sami textile patterns and ornaments of horn handicraft from various regions

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE — A NEW PARTNERSHIP

In 1990 the United Nations proclaimed year 1993 as *International Year for the World's Indigenous People*, with a view to strengthening international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous communities in the areas, inter alia, of human rights, the environment, development, education and health, recognizing the value and the diversity of cultures and the forms of social organization of the World's indigenous people.

(U.N. resolution 45/154 of December 1990)

